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BEFORE

THE COUNCIL OF THE CHURCH INSTITUTION,

FEBRUARY 17, 1869.

CECIL RAIKES, ESQ. M.P., IN THE CHAIR.

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BY THE

**REV. ALFRED JONES,**

LATE HEAD MASTER OF ASKE'S HOSPITAL,

SECRETARY OF THE SOCIETY FOR THE INCREASE OF THE HOME  
EPISCOPATE, AND THE SUNDAY REST ASSOCIATION.

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## ADDRESS.

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It is generally admitted that the number of Bishops of the Reformed Church of England has been for centuries inadequate to supply the spiritual wants of the people, and it has long been the wish of good men that all our large Dioceses were subdivided, and our Episcopate were increased.\* The vast and rapid increase of our home population has entirely outgrown the episcopal provision made for it more than a thousand years ago. Indeed there are fewer Bishops now than in olden times,† for we are informed from authentic records that every Diocese, besides its own Bishop, had a Suffragan or Assistant Bishop, and frequently two or three Suffragans at one time: for instance Bishop Longland of Lincoln (A.D. 1529) had three at the same time; and he assigned as a reason, in his petition for them to the Pope, *the great extent of his Diocese.*‡

In the best ages of the Christian Church the Dioceses were much smaller than they are in England at the present time. The Seven Churches of Asia § spoken of in the Apocalypse were seven Dioceses, each having its own Bishop, and the seven taken together were not so

\* Bishop Burnet's Hist. of Reformation, i. 262. *Vid.* also Bishop Gibson on Visitations, p. xii. Lond. 1717. Bingham, Eccl. Antiq. b. ix. c. viii.

† In the seventh century Pope Gregory advised Augustine, the first Archbishop of Canterbury, to create two Metropolitans, each with twelve Bishops under them, besides the British Bishoprics already established when he came. (*Vid.* Beda, Eccl. Hist. i. 29.)

‡ *Vid.* Pegge on the Winkburne Seal, Archæologia, vol. vii. The late Bishop of Lincoln said, in 1854, that if a Bishop of Lincoln "should wish to preach in every church of his Diocese, and to devote one Sunday to each parish, it would require more than fifteen years to make the circuit. (*Vid.* First Report of the Cathedral Commission, p. xvi.)

§ These churches were all in the district of Proconsular Asia, which was a little larger than the counties of York and Lancaster; and in the eighth century there were eighty Bishoprics in it. Bingham, b. ix. c. 2, 3, Usher's Dis. on Proconsular Asia.

large as many of the Dioceses of England. At the Reformation Archbishop Cranmer and the other Reformers, being desirous to return as much as possible to the primitive usages of the Christian Church, determined to increase the Episcopate by the subdivision of Dioceses, although there was a regular succession of Suffragan Bishops, and every facility to obtain them by the Suffragans Act of Henry VIII. (26 Henry VIII. c. 14). Six new Sees were then founded, and ten more were to be erected, and Parliament gave the necessary power (31 Henry VIII. c. 9).

The preamble of this Bill, Bishop Burnet says, "was written with the King's own hand. He also wrote a list of all the new Sees he intended to found [out of the revenues of the religious houses]; which were, Waltham for Essex, St. Alban's for Hertford, another for Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire out of the monasteries of Dunstable, Newenham, and Elston, another for Oxfordshire and Berkshire out of the rents of Osney and Thame, one for Northampton and Huntingdon out of Peterborough, one for Middlesex out of Westminster, one for Leicester and Rutland out of Leicester, one for Gloucestershire out of St. Peter's in Gloucester, one for Lancashire out of Fountain and the Archdeaconry of Richmond, one for Suffolk out of Edmondsbury, one for Stafford and Salop out of Shrewsbury, one for Nottingham and Derby out of Welbeck, Warsop, and Thurgarton, and one for Cornwall out of the rents of Launceston, Bodmyn, and Tywardreth. Over these he wrote 'Bishoprics to be made.'"<sup>\*</sup> The design of our English Reformers in this sub-division of our Dioceses was to promote the principles of the Reformation. The number of our Bishoprics would have been forty-three, besides twenty-six Suffragans, which would have made a total of sixty-nine Bishops.

Now, the population of England and Wales at that period was about 4,000,000, for whom our English Reformers, considered about seventy Bishops ought to be had to promote their spiritual well-being. What would those holy martyrs say now, when the population has increased five fold † in the course of three hundred years, whilst only one ad-

<sup>\*</sup> Bishop Burnet, Hist. of Reformation, by Dr. Corrie, p. 181. Parker, Lond. 1847.

† The population of England and Wales at the Norman Conquest was probably 1,250,000. At the Reformation, about 4,000,000. (*Vid.* First Report of Cathedral Commissioners, p. 38.) The population now is 20,000,000. The increase in the first half of this century was ten millions, and equals the increase of all preceding ages. (Census, 1851, vol. i. p. 82, s. 8.)

ditional Episcopal See \* has been founded in that time, viz. the See of Manchester, and when, moreover, the office of Suffragan Bishop, which "had been accustomed to be had in this realm," before and after the Reformation, has become obsolete for more than two hundred years? If the design of the Reformers had been faithfully carried out, many have thought England would have been saved many of her sorrows, and especially the great Rebellion. After the cessation of the appointment of Suffragan Bishops, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, confirmation † and other episcopal duties were generally neglected; and Dr. Heylin says, in his *Life of Archbishop Laud*, ‡ "had confirmation been as diligently practised by the Bishops as it was piously and religiously retained by them, it would have much conduced to their safe standing in the Church, and procured a greater veneration for their persons also." Many faithful men strongly advocated an extension of the Episcopate to bring about a better state of things in Church and State, but our authorities refused to hear, and then came "that fearful judgment which rent into shreds the network both of Church and State." §

The Episcopate was withheld from North America for about one hundred and seventy years. Petitions and expostulations were addressed by the North American colonists to England, representing the spiritual privations and hardships they were subjected to for the want of an Episcopate; and Archbishops Tenison and Secker, Bishops Sherlock and Lowth, united with them, || but the authorities in England remained deaf to their entreaties: ¶ and many have thought that her sinful conduct in this respect caused the rupture between the two

\* Two Sees have been founded, Ripon and Manchester; but the total increase is only by one, by the union of Gloucester and Bristol. Coventry was a separate Episcopal See for several hundred years, and so was Bristol.

† Bingham, vol. ix. p. 195. Baxter said, "Not one in a hundred is confirmed at all; because the Dioceses are so vast that the Bishop cannot do this and his other offices for the hundredth part of his flock" (English Nor. Conf. ch. xix.)

‡ *Life of Laud*, Introduct. p. 10.

§ Bishop of St. Andrews' Sermon. Oxford. Ramsden Sermon. 1857, p. 13.

|| *Vid.* Historical Notices of the Church of England in the North American Colonies, by the late Rev. Canon Hawkins.

¶ Caswall's *America*, p. 132. "The few clergy in this country were all ordained in England; and of the candidates who were sent from America to be ordained in England, one-fifth perished or died from sickness." (Caswall, p. 131.) On the loss to the Church, and also to Christianity itself, see Caswall, pp. 147-331.

countries, and deprived England of her fairest and largest North American possessions; and if the same unhappy policy which denied the Episcopate to America continues much longer to obstruct the extension of the Episcopate in England itself, it will probably produce another rupture—it will precipitate the separation of Church and State.” \*

But the time came at last, though culpably delayed, when America obtained her desire, and this be it said to the glory of the Scottish Episcopal Church; † and now, in less than one hundred years, the Episcopate has increased to the number of forty-five, and that vast continent is covered over with as many dioceses, whilst an American dissenter, speaking of the American Episcopal Church after it obtained an Episcopate, says, “ Its history subsequent to the Revolution has been marked by an ever-increasing prosperity. Nor has the spiritual prosperity of the Church been less remarkable than its external growth. It possesses a degree of life and energy throughout all its extent, and an amount of vital piety in its ministers and members such as it never had in its colonial days. It flourishes like a tree planted by the rivers of water.” ‡ Can a stronger argument be used than this, for the extension of the Episcopate at home? Thank God, we see the same blessed and glorious effects produced by the extension of the Episcopate in all our colonies. Forty Bishoprics have been founded by the pious munificence of the faithful sons and daughters of the Holy Church of England; nor would there be any lack of means to found new Sees at home if *the Legislature would grant the Church enabling power to subdivide her vast Dioceses, and to increase her Episcopate*, commensurate with the increase of the population. But for 300 years the Episcopate of this country has remained almost stationary, only having increased by one. The consequence is, that, while on the one hand the Church in America by the extension of its Episcopate has won one-half of its existing Clergy and even some of its Bishops § from the sects; and is increasing in the ratio of more than double that of the population; ||

\* The Bishop of Lincoln's Sermon on the death of Canon Hawkins, p. 13. 1868.

† *Id.* Dr. Ronth's Reliquiæ Sacræ, Dedication.

‡ Religion in America, by Robert Baird, New York, 1856, p. 443.

§ Bishop of Oxford's History of the American Church, p. 400. Cassell's America, p. 257.

|| Caswall's America, p. 399.



on the other hand, our own church, which denied the Episcopate to her children in America for 170 years, being unable to increase the number of her Chief Pastors in a degree commensurate with the increase of her Clergy and people, within is torn asunder by factions, and without is threatened with destruction from those millions who have grown up as sheep having no shepherd. Alas! she cannot say, in reference to these wandering sheep, "I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me," since the average number of immortal souls committed to the fatherly superintendence of one single Bishop is 700,000, and 700 Clergy. Truly, "the harvest is plenteous, but the labourers are few." May every faithful son and daughter of our Church, therefore, "pray to the Lord of the harvest, to send forth labourers into his harvest."

And now, what plan shall we adopt to remove the evils under which the Church of England has suffered, and still suffers? The answer is threefold:—

I. By the subdivision of Dioceses.

II. By the appointment of Suffragan Bishops under the Act of Henry VIII. (26 Henry VIII. c. 14), or by a new Act altogether.

III. By the resignation of Bishops disabled by age or other infirmity.

1. The Sub-division of Dioceses. The primitive Church of Christ proceeded in the conversion of the world, first, by the creation of new Sees; and then, as the Christian population increased, by the sub-division of them. Our Blessed Lord in the Apocalypse designates the Chief Pastors of His Church by the significant emblem of *Stars*,—stars in His right hand.† Now, as the numbers of the faithful multiplied, those stars were multiplied, and grouped together in constellations.‡ In other words, as the believers increased, in the same ratio the Diocesan system and Provincial system increased likewise,

\* The argument adduced at the time of delivery is not reprinted in this edition, inasmuch as the object of it has been attained by the restoration of the Suffragans Act, and the passing of the Resignation of Aged Bishops Bill.

† Rev. i. 20. Socrates terms Serapion, who was Bishop of Thmuis, "the Angel of the Church of Thmuis." Lib. iv. c. xxiii. 'Ο τοῦς Θμυτῶν ἐκκλησίας ἄγγελος Σεραπίων. S. Aug. Ep. clxii. "Divinâ voce laudatur sub *Angeli* nomine Præpositus Ecclesiæ." Vid. Epiphan. Hær. xxv. Nicolait. n. iii.

‡ Bishop of Lincoln, Sermon on the Rev. Canon Hawkins, p. 18.



and thus it was that the early Church, being knit together by those divinely appointed means, converted the heathen world to the Christian faith, and "increased with the increase of God."

It was one of the fundamental principles of the early Church to increase the Episcopate as the Christian population multiplied: and that wherever a people wished to have a Bishop they ought not to be denied. For instances, "The Second Council of Carthage decreed, that whenever a people increased and they desired to have a Bishop, they ought to be provided with one."\* And our own Synod of Hertford,† held under Archbishop Theodore in the seventh century, re-enacted as one of the most important Canons of the Church that, "more Bishops should be made as the number of believers increased;"‡ and soon after this the Archbishop consecrated four or five Prelates in each of the kingdoms of Mercia and Northumbria; and his successor, Archbishop Brithwald, divided the kingdom of Wessex into two sees, establishing another in Sussex, where previously there was only one.§ At the beginning of the eighth century the Venerable Bede|| urged upon Archbishop Egbert the necessity of the increase of the Episcopate as the population increased. During the middle ages the English Episcopate made great use of Suffragan or Assistant Bishops, for, according to the list of Henry Wharton,¶ there were as many as two hundred and ninety-six Suffragan Bishops from the year A.D. 1016 to A.D. 1605, and in a letter to Strype he says, "If it please God to permit me to finish my *Anglia Sacra*, I shall exhibit a perfect succession of Suffragan Bishops in almost all the Dioceses of England, for about two hundred years before the Reformation."\*\* Hence we see that the English Reformers deemed it necessary to increase the Episcopate if the work of the Reformation was to be carried out, and the English Church restored to the primitive usage of the Christian Church: but alas, their pious design was frustrated by the sacrilegious cupidity of the courtiers of Henry VIII., and our Mother Church is still left "to strain herself in a painful struggle to do her work in the

\* A.D. 390, canon 5.

† A.D. 673.

‡ *Vid.* Bede, *Ecl. Hist.* I. iv. c. 5.

§ Lingard's *Hist. Anglo-Sax. Ch.* vol. i. pp. 86, 87.

|| *Vid.* Bede, ad Archp. Egbert. *Ecl. Hist.* B. i.

¶ H. Wharton's *List of Suffragans.* (*Vid.* Nichols' *Bibl. Topog. of Britain*, vol. vi.)

\*\* App. to Strype's *Life of Cranmer*, p. 1044.

nineteenth century with machinery which was deemed inadequate for the sixteenth." \*

A hundred and fifty years ago one of our most learned prelates, Bishop Gibson,† writes in his work on visitations, "We must not hope to see either Discipline or the Government of the Church in a complete and perfect state as long as the several Districts to be inspected and visited *remain in so many instances so unreasonably large; a just sense of which evil has long made it the wish of good men that a further division of Dioceses in places where it may be found necessary were seriously attempted and acted upon, and that the evil might be mitigated by the appointment of Suffragan Bishops.*"

Joseph Bingham, the most learned English writer on the ancient laws and usages of the church, in his "Ecclesiastical Antiquities" (Book ix. ch. viii.) strongly advocates the subdivision of our Dioceses as the best means of carrying out the principles of the Reformation: "Every city or place of civil jurisdiction should be the seat of an ecclesiastical magistracy, viz. a Bishop with his Presbytery. That this was the general rule observed in the primitive Church I think I have made it appear beyond all dispute . . . . . If the Church of England should think fit to add forty or a hundred more Bishops to her present number she would not be without precedent in the practice of the primitive Church."

The late Archbishop of Canterbury, in his Charge in 1847, when Bishop of Ripon, said, "If, indeed, the Church expects her Bishops to act merely as censors and correctors of their Clergy, and to discharge a certain round of prescribed official duties, which may be measured by the public eye, and are patent to universal observation, it might be questioned whether their numbers were not commensurate with their functions. But, if the Episcopate is to be regarded by our people generally not merely as a name, but *as a living reality, a vital energising principle*—if our Bishops are to identify themselves with the Clergy and people, and to throw their hearts and minds into their Dioceses, to be known among their flocks, as St. Paul was among his, to be the friends, the fathers, and the counsellors of their Clergy, advising them in their difficulties, arbitrating in differences, peace-makers when their influence can avail, resolving cases of conscience when propounded,

\* Bishop of Lincoln's Letter to Viscount Dungannon on the Subdivision of Dioceses, p. 26.

† *Ibid.* Visitation, p. 12. London, 1717.

forwarding by their counsel every good work and labour of love—if they are to be able to judge *with their own eyes as to the practical working of each clergyman in his parish*, to strengthen their hands in their hours of trial and perplexity, to encourage the timid and arouse the lukewarm, to let each congregation hear from time to time from their own lips the words of eternal truth, and the *poor parents of every parish see, that*, besides their own appointed Minister, there is the Chief Pastor of the Diocese, who cares for the souls of their children, and is furthering plans for their spiritual benefit—if, I say, these weighty charges really press upon a Bishop, I know not who can be sufficient for these things, according to the present constitution of our Dioceses.”

These words he uttered twenty-two years ago, and he held the same views until his death. No words can more forcibly set forth the necessity for subdivision than these. Of course, if our Spiritual Fathers in God are merely to discharge a certain round of prescribed official duties, which have no real connection with the spiritual essence of their high and holy office, and if they are to be merely the censors of their Clergy, and to be little other than civil magistrates, then their numbers are equal to their task; but if, on the other hand, the Episcopate “is to be a living reality, a vital energising principle”—“if the spirit of the Lord is upon them, because he has anointed them to preach the Gospel to the poor, to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those that are bruised, and to preach the acceptable year of the Lord,”\*—then it naturally follows that the vast Dioceses of the English Church must be divided, and the Episcopate multiplied, or the spiritual essence of the Episcopate will be lost, and then what follows? Alas, I fear to answer.

The late Archbishop of Canterbury, impressed with these facts, at the commencement of the Session of 1867, requested the Society for the Increase of the Home Episcopate † to prepare the draft of a Bill for the erection of three new Sees, viz., St. Alban’s, Southwell, and Truro, and also for the revival of the Act of Henry VIII. for Suffragan Bishops to assist those Diocesan Bishops who may be disabled by age and other infirmity; and, inasmuch as he considered that it would be accepted the more readily if brought in by a layman, he requested

\* St. Luke, iv. 18, 19.

† Office, 8, Parliament Street, S.W.

Lord Lyttelton to introduce it in the House of Lords. The Bill passed through Committee with very little alteration, but on the Report of Amendments the Suffragan clause was lost, I believe, solely on the ground that the House did not fully understand it. It was otherwise with the principle of the Subdivision of Dioceses. This they understood, and, with wonderful unanimity, the Bill for three new Sees triumphantly passed the House of Lords; and the Church owes a great debt of gratitude to Lord Lyttelton for his energetic labours in this blessed work.

It was expected by some that the Bill would meet with less favour in the House of Commons than in the Lords. But the result was not so. *The House of Commons concurred with the House of Lords in affirming the necessity of an Increase in the Home Episcopate*, but the House was almost unanimous in opinion that the new Bishops should not have seats in the House of Lords, and that the endowments of the new Sees should be raised solely on the voluntary principles. In this view both sides of the House concurred, and the Bill so amended in this particular, and in some other matters of detail, was read a third time and passed.

In this amended form the Bill went back to the Lords. Some of the amendments which had been introduced into the Bill in the House of Commons did not find favour in the House of Peers. In a very thin House, at the close of the Session, it came finally before them, and they re-introduced the former clauses; and when it went back to the Commons Sir Roundell Palmer declined to accept the amendments, and the Bill was lost.

It is not too much to say, that thousands of the faithful members of the English Church, both clerical and lay, deeply lamented that this Bill, which had triumphantly passed both Houses of Parliament, for creating three new Bishoprics, should have been lost under such circumstances; and that so "little weight," as the Committee of the Lower House of Convocation report on Suffragan Bishops, "was attached in the debates upon the Bill to the question of supplying the spiritual needs of our Dioceses, as compared with the weight attached to the question of the temporal, social, Parliamentary, and financial position of the Episcopate, present and proposed. Your Committee feel it to be their duty to express their regret that this character should have been stamped upon the debates, presenting an appearance of a subordination of the spiritual essence of the Episcopate to certain



of its temporal accidents." \* It proved fatal to its final success, and many have said that a golden opportunity was lost to the Church which will never again be granted her. But I do not at all sympathize with the hopelessness of success. Let the Church become more spiritual, and let her ask for the power to extend the spiritual influence of her Chief Pastors among the middle and lower ranks of her people, and I believe it will be readily granted.

The subdivision of our old parishes, I do not hesitate to say, saved the Church and State of England from anarchy and ruin. The Reform Bill of 1832 is said to have effected a reformation among the people, and the peace and quiet of our country for the last forty years is attributed to it. The reformation, however, among the masses is the work of the Clergy of our Church, effected, as I believe, by the breaking up of the old unmanageable overgrown parishes. They have been divided and subdivided, and every subdivision has been a real blessing to the people. "It has been twice blessed. It has blessed those who have given, and those who have received." So will it be with the subdivision of our overgrown Dioceses. It will infuse new life into our ancient municipalities, it will impart new dignity to our country, it will give fresh vigour to our missionary zeal for the conversion of the heathen at home and abroad, and unite the people of our country in the spiritual and social bonds of piety, loyalty, and peace. And then, if this is done, I am persuaded that the designs of the enemies of our Church will come to nought; and, although the Balaks of the world may hire their obsequious Balaams to pronounce curses against the people of God, yet they will only be able to say, as Balaam said of old, "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel. As the valleys are they spread forth, as gardens by the river's side, as the trees of lign-aloes which the Lord hath planted, and as the cedar trees beside the waters."

\* \* \* \* \*

Having proved that these three things are desirable, and that the spiritual wants of the Church demand them, if she is to accomplish her mission in our own land, without looking to the benighted millions lying beyond, I now solemnly ask will the faithful Laity of our Church come forward and help us to obtain them? What we mean by the increase of our Home Episcopate is this, "The diffusion of Evangelical

\* Report of the Committee of the Lower House of Convocation of the Province of Canterbury. Suffragan Bishops, p. 1. 1868.

Truth according to Apostolical order, and in the spirit of Catholic love." We have wanted this for centuries, and we appeal to the Laity to help us to obtain it for themselves, and their wives, their sons, and their daughters, their servants and their workmen, their neighbours and the poor lazars who lie perishing at their doors for lack of knowledge.

The want of adequate spiritual oversight in our land is the source from whence flow the many evils which afflict the Church and State. The Church is torn asunder by schisms; and millions of our fellow countrymen are living without God and dying without hope, and are as sheep having no shepherd.

His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1864, when Bishop of London, publicly declared that there were in his Diocese more than one million of souls unprovided with Divine Grace; and there is every reason to believe that this appalling spiritual destitution is not being diminished, since the increase to the population of London amounts to forty-four thousand souls annually. A similar state of things exists also in all our large towns, and "the most palpable cause of this crying evil is," as the Committee of the Lower House of Convocation affirm in their excellent Report on Suffragan or Assistant Bishops (Feb. 18, 1868) "the impossibility under which the Bishops of such over-peopled Dioceses lie of effectually grappling with it—a result which, in the opinion of your Committee, can only be achieved by a Bishop who shall, with a sufficient body of Clergy, devote himself entirely to the exigences peculiar to the populations newly gathered together in such Dioceses; and, while the Committee believe that this evil cannot be adequately met except by a large subdivision of such Dioceses, they think it might be mitigated by a measure which would meanwhile give to Diocesans the assistance of Suffragan or Assistant Bishops."

"The Committee earnestly hope that nothing which has now been said may be misconstrued as implying disparagement of the labours of our Spiritual Rulers. But the fact remains, that now in the nineteenth century the Episcopate of England is compelled to strain itself in a fruitless endeavour to do its work with a feeble and antiquated machinery, which our forefathers at the Reformation, more than three hundred years ago, deemed insufficient, and which they desired to improve. Indeed that machinery is weaker now than it was three hundred years ago, inasmuch as the office of Suffragan or Assistant



Bishops, which was in use at that time, has now been allowed to become obsolete."

"And we solemnly appeal to the Bishops of our Church, with an humble entreaty, that they would unite in using their influence and exerting their endeavours, in their places in Parliament, as well as in Convocation, to adapt that machinery, by the methods prescribed by the Church of England herself, to the needs of the present times."

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